

SNATCHED FROM THE "JAWS OF SUCCESS" UNITED STATES HAITI POLICY AND STRATEGIC FAILURE

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**SNATCHED FROM THE “JAWS OF SUCCESS”
UNITED STATES HAITI POLICY AND STRATEGIC FAILURE**

by

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United States Army

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ABSTRACT

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Filled with paradox and contradictions, Haitian politics has been marked by continuous struggle and rebellion. America's post-Cold War involvement in Haiti has been driven by a national desire to maximize a peace dividend and especially to return Haiti's democratically elected president, Jean Bertrand Aristide to power. An adept lobbyist and astute politician, Aristide utilized frozen Haitian funds in the US to lobby members of Congress and the Black Caucus to support his return to power. His efforts succeeded when the Congressional Black Caucus identified the Haitian military as the problem and Aristide as the solution. Responding to this significant political pressure, the Clinton administration embarked on a course that ultimately led to a large-scale operation (Uphold Democracy) that would return Aristide to power on the condition that he would implement a neo-liberal economic and political agenda. Aristide complied with a few of the US demands. However, he failed miserably to redress human rights violations and to reform Haitian politics. Instead, he exploited U.S. support for economic reform to promote his personal agenda. By backing Aristide, The U.S. unwittingly turned

the success of Operation Uphold Democracy into strategic failure. This paper seeks to explain how and why this failure came about.

SNATCHED FROM THE “JAWS OF SUCCESS” UNITED STATES HAITI POLICY AND STRATEGIC FAILURE

Can We Ever Get It Right In Haiti?

For nearly two centuries, Haiti has remained an enigma in U.S. foreign policy. Contrary to U.S. desires for the region, Haiti has not established an enduring democracy, despite significant economic, military, and political interactions with the United States since the early 1800s¹. The US - Haiti relationship took a significant turn in the early morning of 19 September 1994 when LTG Henry “Hugh” Shelton, Commanding General of Joint Task Force 180 (JTF-180), stepped out of a U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopter and put his boots on the ground at the Haitian International Airport, launching Operation Uphold Democracy.

As a Haitian-born American and General Shelton’s personal linguist and country adviser, I was in a unique position to observe this unfolding historic event. A massive group of people surrounded us at the airport. We were mobbed by a cast of media people, Navy Seals, Embassy officials, soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division (Light) (10th MD [L]), and several senior Haitian military officers. As we made our way through the crowd, the only thing that I could think about was General Shelton’s personal safety, given the uncertainty of Haiti’s political, civil, and military environment. After two years of planning, this operation had become a reality. During the next 30 days, a series of negotiations and policy decisions culminated in the removal of an illegal government and the return to power of the duly elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide.

Operation Uphold Democracy was a success story. For once, the Haitian people could see a beacon of hope and a path out of their national misery. However, the celebration soon ended because U.S. policy – and the strategy that implemented that

policy – were based on short-term interests rather than long term strategic objectives. The result was failure.

Over thirteen years later, we have witnessed Haiti's on-going national struggle, which has included another exile for Aristide, several elections, increased drug trafficking, and numerous United Nations resolutions and missions – all to no avail for beleaguered Haitians. Upon his return on 15 October 1994, Aristide had a unique opportunity to change Haiti's future for the better. Instead, he chose not to fulfill commitments he had made to the U.S. for economic and political reforms. Eventually, he failed miserably to redress human rights abuses and used an economic reform agenda to promote his own personal political agenda.² The US effort to restore stability and democracy in Haiti indeed reflected an attempt both to learn from past mistakes and to respond to domestic U.S. political pressures. The operation was very popular with the native populace and, by most accounts, scored some notable successes. However, many observers claim that the U.S. has gained nothing strategically from its recent initiatives in Haiti.³

This SRP explains why America's attempt to bolster human rights and promote political reform in Haiti did not work after a successful and non-violent military intervention. It further explains why returning Aristide to power led to a strategic failure.

Background/Prelude to Operation Uphold Democracy

The island country of Haiti occupies an area of 10,714 square miles – about the size of Maryland – and has a population of 8,706, 497 people.⁴ Hispaniola, the island Haiti shares with the Dominican Republic, lies approximately 600 miles from the Florida coast and 50 miles from Cuba. Haiti occupies the western section and much of the

mountainous region of Hispaniola. A series of nineteenth-century conflicts – to include a 22-year Haitian occupation of the Republic – resulted in the establishment of north-south borders.⁵ Ethnically, 95 percent of Haitians descended from Africa, and 5 percent descended from Europe. Many Haitians are illiterate; French and Creole are Haiti's predominant languages. Eighty percent of Haitians are Catholic, and 16 percent Protestant. Many Haitians practice Voodoo.⁶

Haiti was the first black republic in the world to gain its independence and only the second independent nation in the Western Hemisphere – the United States being the first.⁷ Haitian slaves led by Toussaint L'Ouverture rose against the colonial French and gained independence from France on 1 January 1804.⁸ L'Ouverture was a fearless patriot, but he was later tricked by Napoleon, who seemingly agreed to recognize Haitian independence. However, the French captured L'Ouverture and imprisoned him in France, where he died.⁹ In exile years later, Napoleon was asked about the deception and mistreatment of Toussaint. Napoleon simply replied, "What could the death of one wretched Negro mean to me?"¹⁰

Haiti's quest for national independence has endured two centuries of chaos, conflict, and dysfunctional political and governmental systems. In 1915, Haiti's door was opened for a U.S. military intervention because of endemic corruption and increasing foreign influence. The resulting occupation lasted 19 years – characterized by unclear U.S. goals, inconsistent policy, and a simple desire to prevent interventions by others.¹¹ Between the end of the occupation in 1934 and 1991, Haiti experienced more than 40 changes in leadership.¹²

The main objectives of Operation Uphold Democracy were to re-establish civil order and security, stabilize political institutions, and return the democratically elected president to office. A popular and charismatic Catholic priest, Jean Bertrand Aristide mesmerized many of the Haitian people and won 67 percent of the popular vote in a presidential election held on 16 December 1990. Many international observers validated his election as fair and legitimate. Aristide took office in February 1991 but was overthrown by a military coup led by Haitian Army Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras, who sent Aristide into exile in September of the same year.¹³

The United States, the United Nations, and the Organization of American States joined in supporting the return of Aristide to power through a series of diplomatic, economic, and political initiatives. US support was a response to domestic pressures on the Clinton Administration to end the Haitian tragedy, dramatized as desperate refugees fleeing violence in Haiti faced peril at sea in an effort to escape.¹⁴ The U.S. Coast Guard intercepted 70,000 Haitians at sea between 1991 and 1994.¹⁵ As Haitian fugitives filled holding camps and the Cedras regime stalled in implementing provisions of the Governors Island Accord – which directed return of power in Haiti to the elected government – a U.S. response was imminent.¹⁶

In an effort to demonstrate U.S. and international resolve to depose or discredit the Cedras regime, the Clinton Administration dispatched the USS Harlan County to Port-au-Prince Harbor. Upon arrival, however, lacking clear orders and facing armed protestors on the pier and armed Haitian patrol boats as well as other hostile demonstrators on shore threatening to turn Haiti into the next Somalia, the captain of the Harlan County withdrew.¹⁷ Thus a message was delivered to the citizens of Haiti

and the international community that the United States would not intervene in the affairs of Haiti. This emboldened the Cedras regime to further restrict international aid and circumvent the Governor's Island Accords.¹⁸ The stage had been set for Operation Uphold Democracy.

At the National Command Authority's direction, US Atlantic Command (USACOM) initiated joint planning based on two options.¹⁹ The Deputy Commanding General of USACOM, Lieutenant General William Hartzog, an experienced planner and with a staff seasoned by Operations Just Cause (Panama) and Urgent Fury (Grenada), prepared two plans for Haiti.²⁰ According to Operation Plan (OPLAN) 2370, The XVIII Airborne Corps (JTF-180) would execute a violent seizure of key sites in Port-au-Prince in order to wrest authority from the illegal government. The second plan, OPLAN 2380, formed JTF-190 around the 10th MD (L) to conduct a permissive entry into Haiti. This permissive entry required the acquiescence of the Cedras regime or a handover of control from JTF-180 in the aftermath of its forcible entry. In the meantime, 10th MD (L) planners prudently prepared for the contingency that a permissive entry might be less than completely permissive. In short, JTF-190 had a "takedown option" of its own, if needed.²¹ Although no one could anticipate the events that actually played out, some military planners did speculate the Cedras regime would back down at the last possible moment to avoid an armed confrontation with U.S. forces.²²

What complicated the potential execution of either of these plans was the late-breaking negotiation mission President Clinton dispatched to Haiti. This mission was led by former President Jimmy Carter, retired General Colin Powell, and Senator Sam Nunn. The ensuing Carter-Cedras agreement called for a cooperative relationship

between the Haitian government and the U.S. military mission in Haiti. Additionally, the Haitian military would accommodate a smooth transition of national leadership for the return of Aristide and the early and honorable retirement of certain Haitian military officers.²³

Although I had participated in the planning for Operation Uphold Democracy, the Army transferred me from XVIII Airborne Corps to Heidelberg, Germany in August 1994. While sitting in a Security Managers course in Vilseck, Germany, I was approached by two individuals who depicted themselves like CID agents. They told me to pack up. They had a Blackhawk helicopter waiting to take me back to Heidelberg. They informed me that a three-star general wanted me back at Fort Bragg for an operation. The V Corps G-3 met the helicopter at the airfield and provided instructions for a flight back to the states, which was scheduled to depart eight hours later. Three days later, the XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters flew from Fort Bragg to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and embarked on the USS Mount Whitney, the flagship of the U.S. 2nd Fleet.

As we steamed towards Port-au-Prince, negotiations continued. As the window for heading off an invasion closed, a report from an unknown source warned the Cedras regime that U.S. aircraft were departing Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, for a mission in Haiti. Only then did the Cedras government capitulate.²⁴ This last-minute diversion of the forcible entry option struck directly at the seam between the forcible entry plans of JTF-180 and the permissible handoff plans of JTF-190. The forcible entry plan was already underway, and elements of the 82nd Airborne Division were indeed in flight to Haiti when conditions on the ground changed. Recalling the 82nd and putting the 10th MD (L) in motion was not in itself difficult. The more intricate part was redirecting

critical support and logistics assets required by the forcible entry plan that could not be diverted to join the 10th MD (L) and other associated forces. Original planning had scheduled JTF 180 to enter Haiti and a week later to conduct a battle handover to JTF-190. Planning had not considered aborting a forced entry by JTF-180 hours after it was enroute to the objective area.²⁵

The plan for an intervention in Haiti began to coalesce soon after President-elect Bill Clinton learned that he may have to deal with as many as 150,000 Haitian refugees landing on Florida shores.²⁶ After taking office in January 1993, the Clinton Administration focused on crafting a new Haiti policy. This operation succeeded for several reasons: It heeded lessons learned from past operations; it was properly planned; it was well-led; it made effective uses of Psychological Operations (PSYOP).

Why was Operation Uphold Democracy Successful?

Rapidly changing circumstances imposed an unwelcome burden on Lieutenant General Shelton to improvise “new rules” for the game as the operation unfolded. As Shelton put it, “Never in my wildest imagination did I think I would be coming in here [Haiti] with the mission of cooperating and coordinating [with the Cedras regime] in an atmosphere of mutual respect.”²⁷ General Shelton’s leadership was instrumental during the operation: He set the example to his staff – and the entire JTF – by treating the Cedras government and the Haitian people with respect and dignity. He attributed much of his success to Sun Tzu, who advised “Know yourself and know your enemy and you might figure the outcome of a thousand battles”.²⁸ During the planning process, General Shelton focused on learning about the personalities of the central figures in the Cedras regime. He started with Francois, the ruthless Chief of Police, and

Biamby, Cedras' chief of staff. Additionally, he also studied the organizational structure of the Haitian military to include the police companies, heavy weapons division, and the headquarters defense unit.²⁹ Completely unforeseen, however, was the necessity of working out arrangements with Cedras and collaborating in the streets with Haiti's widely despised army and police the – Haitian Army (Forces Armee d'Haiti (FAd'H))-to effect a smooth return to democratic governance.

Scarcely less difficult was the psychological adjustment required of US commanders and soldiers. They necessarily prepared for combat, but suddenly found themselves in a nation-building operation. They had to make the mental adjustment from defeating the Cedras regime's forces to becoming partners with them in implementing a peaceful political transition. This sudden change in US posture and mindset not only muddled the soldiers' mission but also baffled the Haitian populace. Ordinary Haitian citizens initially viewed U.S. forces as liberators – their deliverers from the oppression of the Cedras Junta Government. But Cedras' sudden capitulation left the Haitians bewildered and frustrated. Many expected – even thirsted for – an orgy of revenge against their oppressors. General Shelton could not allow this to happen. When these citizens realized that a deal had been cut and that the Junta leaders would go unpunished, a sense of disappointment and unfulfilled expectations set in.³⁰

Shelton had to convince Cedras and the FAd'H that, although he was not there to seize and arrest them forcibly, he would brook no interference with his mission – central to which was their removal from positions of power and authority. General Shelton demonstrated confidence from the start in his military and diplomatic role. Arriving at Port-au-Prince International Airport in battle dress uniform and beret, he exuded the

confidence, assurance, and authority of command – though in fact, he had no way of knowing whether all the “official” and “unofficial” armed factions in Haiti would honor the Cedras-Carter Agreement.³¹

Psychological Operations

Operation Uphold Democracy made effective use of PSYOP. Commenting on the importance of PSYOP to JTF-180's success, General Shelton reported that

As Commander of Joint Task Force 180 during Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, it is my belief that the integration of psychological operations early in the planning process was critical to the successful execution of the operation. Long before any American military forces stepped ashore, PSYOP helped us quickly accomplish our political and military objectives by semi-permissive operations. Without a doubt, PSYOP won the hearts and minds of the Haiti's citizens, as well as setting the stage for the peaceful accomplishment of the Joint Task force's mission. There is no question PSYOP saved lives, on both sides, during operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. It proved to be the unsung, yet vitally important, factor in this operation. A true combat multiplier.³²

The United States delivered loudspeaker messages that were transmitted from U.S. Coast Guard cutters. These messages significantly stemmed the flow of Haitians out of the country.³³ Additional messages were broadcast by the 193rd Special Operations Group's EC-130 (SOG) Command solo aircraft. To enable these messages to reach the target audience, 10,000 transistor radios were air-dropped throughout Haiti. Messages from Aristide were broadcast daily on three FM radio channels, along with discussions by a panel of Haitian experts on the reestablishment of the Aristide Government. The purpose of these broadcasts was to inform and educate the Haitian people on the basic theories and concepts of democracy in Haiti.³⁴ The Joint PSYOP Task Force (JPOTF) promoted civil order and reduced Haitian-on-Haitian violence by broadcasting President

Aristide's messages of peace and reconciliation in order to discourage acts of revenge or retribution.³⁵

The JPOTF's biggest test

was the development of a campaign to generate public trust and confidence in the interim Public Security Force (IPSF) which was to replace the notorious Haitian Police force. This effort was made even more difficult when it was learned that many members of the old police force had been incorporated into the new organization. The POTF developed a campaign that emphasized to the population that all members of the police force had been carefully screened regarding prior involvement with the Junta's security forces and had undergone proper training on proper police procedures and respect for human rights.³⁶

A more intricate challenge was to control the "decompression" of Haiti's societal tensions. Planners feared that the sudden elimination of the existing police force would create a security vacuum that neither US military police nor international police monitors would be able to fill. Hence, the authorities faced a dilemma. They could not disband the standing police force, but neither could they permit it to continue to terrorize and intimidate the populace. This dilemma thus necessitated the complex task of supervising and transforming the police force in the streets – which frequently meant defending it from angry citizens prepared to seek a full measure of "mob justice" – while discreetly purging it of its most notorious human rights abusers. In this manner, the multinational force adeptly laid a foundation for an interim police force while organizing a training program to establish an entirely new, professionally trained one.³⁷ Despite these efforts, the new police force's credibility - in the Haitian public's eyes as well as those of international observers – was a constant source of anxiety.

Through establishment of an interim police force and progress towards building a new police force, JTF-180 had achieved its military objectives and General Shelton began transitioning command of the mission to MG Meade, Commander JTF-190. JTF-

180's successfully achieved critical strategic objectives: 1) removal of the junta regime; 2) stopping the flow of refugees; 3) protection of U.S. citizens and facilities; 4) re-establishment of law and order; and 5) return of the democratically elected president to office.³⁸ LTG Cedras submitted his resignation on 10 October 1994. Then he, his family, and Biamby left the country peacefully on 13 October 1994.³⁹ Aristide returned to Haiti on 15 October 1994, accompanied by a large U.S. Congressional Delegation, including several members of the Congressional Black Caucus and Secretary of State Warren Christopher.⁴⁰

US Strategic Failure (Aristide's Return/Departure)

JTF-180 departed Haiti on 25 October 1994. Many Haitians considered General Shelton a hero and even suggested that he should run for President of Haiti. JTF-190 forces remained in Haiti until March 1995 when their mission was taken over by a United Nations peacekeeping force. A year later, only 309 U.S. forces – primarily support personnel – remained in Haiti.⁴¹

Following the departure of the bulk of American Forces and the transition to a UN-administered peacekeeping mission, Aristide made a series of bad decisions. Among them was the disbanding of the Haitian military in an attempt to purge those with records of atrocities and human rights violations.⁴² Additionally, his promises to reform the economy and create a stable environment which would promote democracy and human rights faltered. Though faced with economic, political, and social violence, the country was able to conduct parliamentary and governmental elections in the summer of 1995 under the watchful eyes of international peacekeepers and observers.⁴³ Following these elections, a presidential election was held in December 1995 in which Rene

Preval, a former Prime Minister to Aristide, was elected with 88 percent of the vote – with a 30 percent voter turnout.⁴⁴ Notably, this was the first time in Haiti's turbulent history that a president had served a full term and had then been peacefully followed by his elected successor. President Aristide had fulfilled a promise made to the Clinton Administration not to run for another term.⁴⁵

During President Preval's five-year term, Haitians witnessed minor improvements as he made some attempts to rebuild infrastructure and increase agricultural production.⁴⁶ In 1996, Aristide created a new political party called the Lavalas Family (FL) and broke away from his old party Lavalas Political Organization (OPL). Following this split, OPL changed its name to the Struggling People's Organization but maintained the acronym OPL. Aristide thus sought to move away from Preval's mandate in order to formulate a new identity and to revive his political career.⁴⁷ He was obviously violating the spirit of his agreement with the Clinton Administration to withdraw from Haitian politics following his elected term in office.

In 2000, instability in Haiti again necessitated the introduction of a multinational force. Scheduled elections were delayed until stability and security could be restored. When Presidential and Senate elections took place, Aristide emerged as the winner with only a 5% voter turn-out. Aristide, who had promised not to run for another term could not resist his thirst for power and control of Haitian politics. So once again, he found a way to circumvent the Haitian constitution.⁴⁸ Many groups protested this election result. However, Jean Bertrand Aristide's election was upheld, so he once again took office on 7 February 2001. However, the controversy surrounding this election led to a political stalemate that essentially paralyzed the government.

In April 2001, since there had been little progress towards political reconciliation, the Organization of American States (OAS) initiated negotiations to break the political stalemate over the make-up of a new electoral council.⁴⁹ By the summer of 2001, armed attacks on police facilities were increasing tensions between the different political parties. In December 2001, gunmen attacked the homes of government and opposition leaders and the National Palace. Following these attacks, negotiations were suspended indefinitely.⁵⁰ Some believed that these attacks had increased because their perpetrators knew that the U.S. was preoccupied with the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing Global War on Terror and would not be inclined to quell political unrest in Haiti.

The UN-OAS Permanent Council then adopted Resolutions 806 and 822: Resolution 806 established a Special Mission to Haiti to begin in March 2002; it would focus on ways to promote security and enhance democracy and justice.⁵¹ However, the political and security atmosphere in Haiti continued to deteriorate. In response, the OAS formulated Resolution 822. Adopted on 4 September 2002, it called for a new course in Haiti.⁵² Nonetheless, protests, attacks, strikes, killings, and demonstrations by gangs continued from November 2002 to February 2003. Also, according to U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and Customs officials, Haiti was becoming as a leading transshipment area for approximately 15% of the cocaine entering the United States.⁵³ The OAS then decided to send a retired U.S. Career Ambassador, Terence Todman, as a Special Envoy to Haiti in September and October of 2003.⁵⁴ In January 2004, during a Summit of the Americas, Caribbean leaders proposed a political solution which Aristide accepted. However, by the end of February 2004, a group of rebels led Guy Philippe, a former police chief seeking to remove Aristide, advanced to within 25 miles of Port-au-

Prince.⁵⁵ President Aristide then submitted his resignation and fled on a plane to South Africa. Haiti had once again fallen into a state of turmoil and insecurity. Nearly a decade prior to this debacle, in a conversation with the departing leader of the military junta, Cedras informed me that he alone had prevented the execution of Aristide during the coup. He believed Aristide was mentally ill. And he warned that the United States would eventually regret restoring Aristide to power.

Soon after Aristide's departure, the UN passed Security Council Resolution 1529, which authorized a multinational force in Haiti with participants from Chile, Canada, France, and the United States. The participating nations would provide personnel and equipment to restore order in Haiti.⁵⁶ On 30 April 2004, the United Nations passed Security Council Resolution 1542, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).⁵⁷ The resolution called for:

I. Secure and Stable Environment:

(a) in support of the Transitional Government, to ensure a secure and stable environment within which the constitutional and political process in Haiti can take place;

(b) to assist the Transitional Government in monitoring, restructuring, and reforming the Haitian National Police, consistent with democratic policing standards, including through the vetting and certification of its personnel, advising on its reorganization and training, including gender training, as well as monitoring/mentoring members of the Haitian National Police;

(c) to assist the Transitional Government, particularly the Haitian National Police, with comprehensive and sustainable Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes for all armed groups, including women and children associated with such groups, as well as weapons control and public security measures;

(d) to assist with restoration and maintenance of the rule of law, public safety and public order in Haiti through the provision inter alia of operational support to the Haitian National Police and the Haitian Coast Guard, as well as with their institution strengthening, including the re-establishment of the corrections system;

(e) to protect United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment and ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel, taking into account the primary responsibility of the Transitional Government in that regard;

(f) to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, within its capabilities and areas of deployment, without prejudice to the responsibilities of the Transitional Government and of police authorities;

II. Political Process:

(a) to support the constitutional and political process under way in Haiti, including through good offices, and foster principles and democratic governance and institutional development;

(b) to assist the Transitional Government in its efforts to bring a process of national dialogue and reconciliation;

(c) to assist the Transitional Government in its efforts to organize, monitor, and carry out free and fair municipal, parliamentary and presidential elections at the earliest possible date, in particular through the provision of technical, logistical, and administrative assistance and continued security, with appropriate support to an electoral process with voter participation that is representative of the national demographics, including women;

(d) to assist the Transitional Government in extending State authority throughout Haiti and support good governance at local levels.

III. Human Rights:

(a) to support the Transitional Government as well as Haitian human rights institutions and groups in their efforts to promote and protect human rights, particularly of women and children, in order to ensure individual accountability for human rights abuses and redress for victims;

(b) to monitor and report on the human rights situation, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, including on the situation of returned refugees and displaced persons;

The Security Council also requested that MINUSTAH cooperate and coordinate with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in carrying out its mandate.⁵⁸

Analysis

Planning based on lessons learned, proper leadership, knowing the enemy, and understanding how to win the hearts and minds of the people of Haiti were essential to the success of Operation Uphold Democracy. General Shelton's experience in the art of negotiation and building relationships was the key ingredient in meeting the goals and objectives of the operation. He kept the enemy in check by ensuring that everyone was treated with respect and dignity while not wavering from the mission. Sun Tzu best described General Shelton's performance in Haiti:

Encourage other leaders. When you see bravery, reward the act. When you see intelligence, reward the attribute. Bring forth potential leaders where one day you will be able to step down so another who is more capable can take your place. The group as a whole will be better for it. But in the meantime, you are truly the undisputed leader with little care for title of the position other than serving your organization.⁵⁹

General Shelton's ability to change a mission in midstream from a forcible to permissive entry was remarkable. Another amazing contribution was the performance of many of the Creole speaking linguists; though they were not integrated into the planning process, their performance was flawless and seamless.

Aristide's return to power was largely the result of pressure from influential lobbyists and the Congressional Black Caucus. Congresswoman Maxine Waters, an advocate of Aristide who was unafraid to express her opinion declared, "I reminded him that those of us who watched what happened in Rwanda did not want to ever see again an opportunity to save lives, and not really do something about it".⁶⁰ This Congressional intrusion disrupted U.S. policy and strategy for finding a solution for this troubled Caribbean island. America is often depicted as a practitioner of 'hard politics,' which means that it considers world power, national interests, and politics to be defined in

realist terms. Some critics argue that America resorts to force too quickly as a means of resolving international disputes.⁶¹

Many regard President Clinton as a master in manipulating domestic, political and foreign policy issues. He used the invasion of Haiti to boost his poll numbers with acceptable risks. He knew that the Cedras regime did not have the means – or the intestinal fortitude – to withstand the application of American military power. What the U.S. wanted was a quick solution, not another scenario similar to Somalia. In sum, the Clinton administration placed a premium on finding a “quick and easy” solution in Haiti. Unfortunately, the desire for a “quick solution” has often been the nemesis of any lasting solution to Haiti’s problems. The U.S. military has been in Afghanistan for six years and Iraq for five years and in places like Germany, Korea, and Japan for over a half of century. In contrast, U.S. policy towards Haiti usually emphasizes an immediate solution, despite the fact that Haiti has been oppressed by dictatorship and human rights violations for decades, if not centuries.⁶²

Many in the U.S. government were warned about Aristide’s ambitions and untrustworthiness and understood that they were replacing a dictator with an unstable person. Republican Jesse Helms described Aristide as a “psychopath and demonstrable killer,” yet the Clinton administration blatantly supported Aristide’s return.⁶³ Democracy technically was never restored after the invasion and Aristide’s return to power. Many argue that Haiti is among those nations categorized as a “failed state.” Some blame the international community for ignoring Haiti after the 1994 intervention. Others blame the U.S. for racial preferences, favoring light-skinned Cuban boat people to the dark-skinned Haitians.⁶⁴

The Haitian economy experienced some surge in the 1995-1997 period, but it continues to suffer mainly due to natural disasters and political setbacks.⁶⁵ In 2006, Haiti's economy, with the help of International Monetary Fund, saw slight growth of 1.8 percent. However, Haiti continues to suffer from high inflation due to lack of exports and foreign investment.⁶⁶

Recommendations

US planners defined an "exit strategy" in Haiti as "the planned transition to the host nation of all functions performed on its behalf by peace operations forces."⁶⁷ In the opinion of scholar Michael Mandelbaum, in Haiti "The exit strategy became the mission."⁶⁸ Certainly, it must be noted that many of the key preconditions for departure – basic order, security, the return of Aristide, and the conduct of a Presidential Election resulting in a peaceful transfer of power – were met. In order to effect a truly lasting solution to Haiti's problems of governance and economic development, the U.S. needs to take the lead in creating a coalition of American and Caribbean countries to help Haiti. This coalition should focus on developing a mentoring process to accomplish the following: (1) ensure a stable educational establishment; (2) establish leadership and political reforms; (3) maintain security/law and order; and (4) promote economic growth.

Education

Haiti must first develop a public information and awareness campaign to educate its population. After two centuries of independence from the French, Haiti is still fighting for her identity. Haitian schools still lack accreditation and are sub-standard. According to a 2003 World Bank report, only 8 percent of Haiti's schools are public, with 92 percent private. It is estimated that over 50 percent of children ages five to twelve are in

school, but only one-third of those progress as far as the 5th grade.⁶⁹ The quality of life for Haitians will change only by revamping the education system. The country needs better facilities and more resources. Fifty-four percent the educational instruction is conducted in houses, churches, and open spaces. According to Marne Pierre, the U.S. should help implement the following educational reforms:

Educational opportunities and job opportunities must be broadened for all Haitians while pilot testing Haitian Creole as the official language of Haiti. In addition, the following should be implemented gradually over time:

1. Increase the current educational budget from 11% to 50% of gross domestic product.
2. Provide educational scholarships to all children who are from poor families.
3. Provide emergency shelter to the current 400,000 child slaves while sending them to school.
4. Provide technical education to all Haitians who want to work but lack the means to do so.
5. Create job service referral centers across the island to help graduates get jobs.
6. Facilitate NGO involvement in the educational process by encouraging NGO members to share their educational expertise.
7. Encourage the Haitians Diaspora to participate in the education innovation process.⁷⁰

Leadership and Political Reforms

Haiti has not advanced in many areas due to poor leadership. On 22 September 1994, while translating for General Shelton in Haiti, one local Haitian in the port mentioned to us that “the problem with all Haitians is that they all want to be President and once in office they take the money and run.” Haitian leaders for two centuries have lacked the will and ability to respond to the needs of their citizens.

The leadership and political solution for Haiti may be for the Haitians to revise and abide by their constitution, which has been ignored since its independence. Haiti's second constitution, promulgated by Emperor Jacques Dessalines on 20 May 1805, had 53 articles.⁷¹ This constitution called for respect for human rights and abolishment of slavery; it focused on the country, the Haitian Army, its people, and branches of government. The constitution was later revised in 1987; however, those revisions – consisting of 298 articles - have been largely neglected.⁷²

Security, Law and Order

The problem with security, and law and order rests with Haiti's judicial system that is directly connected to the constitution. The UN's performance in Haiti has been ineffective so far in establishing a stable environment. The key may be to re-establish a judicial process that will create a credible police force and possibly a new Haitian Army.

Economic Growth

The only way Haiti can build a foundation for economic growth is through sustained investment by the U.S. and international community. Haiti's inexpensive labor market should be globalized to compete with its counterparts in China and Southwest Asia. According to a 2002 Heritage Foundation report, the island generated about 3 billion in gross domestic product (GDP), which equates to about \$370 per capita. The island has one of the world's lowest GDPs and per capita incomes.⁷³

Haitian leaders need to encourage an open market with a cheap labor pool. Existing law and the stubbornness of a few are preventing foreign and local investors from developing assets in Haiti. Haitian leaders must provide incentives for reforms

such as the U.S. Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI). CBI allows “Haiti duty-free access to the United States for most goods, with some limits placed on apparel.”⁷⁴

Conclusion

Without a doubt, the U.S has the ways and means to bring lasting economic and political change to Haiti. The problem, however, lies in the linkage between operational success and the attainment of strategic ends.⁷⁵

Although Operation Uphold Democracy’s success provided hope for the people of Haiti, the strategic objective was never achieved. General Shelton best described the operation:

The lesson learned of Haiti, and of most other contingency operations in this decade, is that while military forces have excelled in achieving military tasks such as establishing order, separating combatants, or safeguarding relief supplies, they are less effective in solving non-military problems rooted in persistent cultural, economic, and political strife. In cases like Haiti, military forces can help create a secure environment in which to pursue lasting political and economic solutions-but they cannot achieve political outcomes themselves. The burden still remains on the statesman and the international community to pursue integrated approaches that employ a broad range of policy tools and processes to ensure long-term success.⁷⁶

America planned the mission in Haiti in favor of a limited military intervention, instead of a forced regime change. Regime change requires time and it takes years to stabilize and reconstruct a nation after it is accomplished. The cycle of accomplishing Security, Stability, Transition, Reconstruction, and Redeployment cannot be completed in six months. The U.S. military established security and facilitated the return of Aristide, but the early redeployment led to failure in stabilization and reconstruction – the two “long poles in the tent.”

A lasting democracy requires patience and time, as we have observed in the cases of Korea, Germany, and Japan. As we are witnessing in Iraq, the aftermath of regime change can be very difficult. Some of the lessons learned in Haiti are being applied in Iraq. Haiti is still in turmoil and may find herself in this situation for a long time as the United States remains preoccupied with its efforts in Iraq and the larger Global War on Terror. As a U.S. strategic priority, Haiti is of lesser importance. Ironically, the only nation capable of mentoring and coaching Haiti to bring long-lasting stability and economic improvement to Haiti is the United States of America. This tiny island's future is bleak without internal changes and U.S. assistance. The Haitian voodoo spell will remain in play, and the suffering will continue until the people of Haiti figure out how to cast off that spell.

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